

Getting the Love You Want



Call today about workshops and other help for
your relationship

Imago Center for Relationships
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We're looking forward to our couples workshop this weekend in Seattle (www.betsyandbruce.com). As former long time Puget Sound residents (our two daughters and their families, including three grandchildren, live there), we always have a special affinity for the participants there and greet each new event as a chance to grow and learn ourselves. As we never tire of saying, this work is a journey not a destination. We are so grateful for the chance to keep on sharing what we know and are passionate about!



This is a great time for both of us. As we come to believe more fully than ever in each other's ideas and creative potential (and to reinforce our beliefs through continuous mutual appreciation), the possibilities keep expanding and the self limitations keep shrinking. Our awareness of our still growing teamwork has prompted this issue's lead article "**The Relationship Mantra: You Gotta Believe!**"

Also, in the next issue or two look for information about new classes, events, and programs for early 2008 both here at 14 Leigh St and elsewhere (as well as via teleclass) that will offer even more support for creating and sustaining the intimate and loving relationships we all seek.

Until next time, as always best wishes for finding the path toward connection and the love you want in your life.

Betsy + Bruce

The Relationship Mantra: You Gotta Believe.

The expression "You Gotta Believe" is for sure well worn. By now it's been the cry of many a local school, college, or professional team's fans, and the slogan for maybe one too many ad campaigns.

Yet despite the overuse, there's an essential truth here. "You Gotta Believe" points to the critical need for a foundation of faith from which positive perceptions of ourselves, our goals, and our place in the scheme of things and those of our partners can grow and flourish. **Belief really is a prerequisite for success.**

Consider these **two contrasting events** that Betsy relates from her earlier years:

In the spring of my senior year in high school, the college acceptances came out. After I opened and read my letter of acceptance to the college I would attend that fall, I rushed down to the college advisor's office to tell her. She gave me a look of complete surprise and said she was shocked that they had accepted me. Almost instantly, my excitement was gone.

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Now I knew that I had learning problems and might have a difficult time getting into college but an even greater fear and doubt was that once I got there, I would fail. That would be even more shameful than not being accepted in the first place.

So my advisor's words basically held out and confirmed a vision of failure for me and validated my hidden fear. Even though the college by admitting me held out the expectation I could succeed, now I had been told by someone in authority that in essence the college admissions office had made a huge mistake. I could not hear the positive message of what it was they saw in me that led them to believe I could do it. Their implied affirmation of what they saw in me and what they thought I could do was overridden by the doubts of someone I looked up to.

In consequence, once on campus and from start to finish in college, I took every step I could, not to succeed and flourish, but to avoid failure! I would even seek out from other students what the "easy" courses were so I could take them and get by and at least defy the negative expectation that was given to me.

The sad part was that in running shamefully from failure, I missed the opportunity to take the risks and set the goals that would have made for real education and growth and true satisfaction of my underlying quest for learning.

I was following this minimal program doing this all alone. I often wonder what my four years would have been like if just one person, especially my parents, whom I now see had their own self-limiting beliefs and expectations, had instead of remaining essentially silent through it all, been able to hold and express the vision and expectation that "You can do it" and actively validate, appreciate and encourage me every inch of the way.

Fortunately, this isn't the only story I have to tell. This second one is the flip side and that's why I am telling it:

Many years later (34 to be exact!), I found myself vaguely motivated to return to graduate school. Yet I was filled with vacillation and doubt. Could I really do this? Could I even complete the application? It was then I heard the words from Bruce, words that I had always wanted and needed to hear, words that made all the difference and contradicted my fears: "You can do it," he said. "I see you. You are motivated, excited, enthusiastic to learn and you ask excellent questions. You are ready and you can do it!!" (no, he didn't say 'You gotta believe', but it amounted to the same thing!)

Hearing his words changed my life. With his unremitting expressions of confident belief that I could do it, all the self negating beliefs I had been carrying around since childhood began to crumble. As he literally hovered over me with encouragement, I filled out the application that made my case, and I was accepted. At age 55 I began a brand new love affair with school and learning and with my life (after kids).

Yes I knew my learning weaknesses probably better than anyone else, but when belief transcended doubt, I learned how to take on these weaknesses and get the help I needed honing my learning skills. The weaknesses no longer occupied the center of my attention. And as Bruce's beliefs in me and visions for me became mine as well, my self-image and self-esteem skyrocketed!

And of course the special bonus was that I was freed up to redouble my belief in him!

So when it comes to laying the foundation of belief, **the power of teamwork is what can make all the difference.** Without it, we are left alone and disconnected and susceptible to doubt at every turn. With teamwork, the potential in all of us can be released. Fear and shame can be dissolved, and excitement and hope can prevail.

The other point here is that though what we say may seem self-evident, **making "belief teamwork" a reality for is easier said than done, and for good reason.** The doubts and fears have a source - often unconscious - from your growing up. **If you grew up with limited, few or even no expectations, validations, and appreciations - your beliefs - from your parents or others concerning who you are and what you dream of, all these stand to dispose you to low self esteem and failure in your relationships as an adult.** These beliefs don't just suddenly go away through some magic affirmation.

Both partners bring these self-limitations often unconsciously into the relationship and thus need each other at times to hold out the expectation, validations, appreciations never received as a child in order to undo them.

So when you hear from us, as you frequently do if you are a regular reader, about the value of appreciation, just remember that **high expectations and beliefs in one another's abilities and aspirations are part of the same package as appreciations.** Herein is the synergistic power of relationships.

And finally, keep in mind that **if and when you are not seeing the positive or possibilities in your partner,** this is more about you than about your partner, because in reality the untapped positive lives in all of us every day. Of course it makes sense that if you grew up in a negative non-appreciating non-believing home, then your eye hasn't been trained to look for the good or potential in others, much less yourself, but only trained to look at the negative and all the reasons why the negative is the proper or necessary stance.

HOMEWORK: teamwork and belief building - a three part assignment

This requires two people (you and your partner). **No team, no teamwork!**

1. Each of you take 10 minutes (separately - need not be done at the same time) **to write down your biggest unfulfilled dreams or life goals for the next 5-10 years..** These could be about anything - career, family, relationships, home, travel, money, service to others, fun, whatever. Don't be limited by present circumstance or negative self-talk or pre-judging. Let yourself be "big". Get at what you truly desire.
2. Make an appointment with your partner and divide the time equally to **take turns sharing your lists with one another.** As the speaker, keep what you say positive - what you dream of and desire, not what you don't want or why it's impossible etc. As the listener, simply listen and make a mental summary of what you hear, maybe writing down your partner's main points so you can refer to the list. As each of you finishes, the other summarizes what was said, sticking as close as possible to what he or she heard. Avoid questions (except maybe to check to see if you heard correctly). Especially avoid any evaluative statements or doubt casting or reality testing or interpretative questions. At the end of each turn the listener simply says to the speaker: "Thank you for telling me about your dreams and goals. It makes sense that you would want me to know them. I want you to keep sharing with me about them so we can be teammates in helping each other truly know and achieve our highest visions and goals".
3. The final part of this assignment is to notice what thoughts, feelings, and reactions you may have while you do it, and then taking turns again to **express what doing this was like for each of you - your excitement or satisfaction or surprises or maybe your fears or doubts.**

We know this may not be as easy as it might appear. If you find this homework interesting or perhaps challenging or especially **if you discover negative energy surfacing,** take a close look at the **Getting the Love You Want© weekends coming up November 30-December 2-11 and February 8-10, 2008,** and then come join us. This is an excellent chance to develop much more fully your relationship vision and goals, as well as learn many safe and reliable processes for dealing with every communication challenge or need.